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Report on Cuba:

Less Electricity, Lots of Bread

Electric power production in Cuba has fallen off 50 per cent since 1958, and is still diminishing, says the Citizens Committee for Free Cuba.

The Committee is a non-profit organization supported by Americans and business and professional Cubans now in exile.

It points out that before the Castro-communist take-over, Cuba's electric production was the fourth highest in Latin America, and was expanding, from 1955 to 1958, at a rate of 12 per cent per year.

The Communist regime took over the Cuban Electric Company on Aug. 4, 1960, and since 1963, electricity has been rationed to consumers, and only 40

per cent of new consumers have been serviced.

Other reports indicate Castro has fallen badly behind his payments to British, French and Canadian suppliers of farm machinery and that Cuba's adverse balance of payments by the end of this year may reach two and a half billions of dollars.

Despite Castro's promises of diversification, the outlook is he will have to depend on sugar for most of his foreign exchange and sugar production is down.

The Committee also states that Cuba's shortage of bread has ended, and that there is a great amount of wheat in the country, delivered from Russia, co-incident with the sale of U. S. wheat to Russia.

"For months earlier this year," the Committee says, "it was almost impossible to purchase bread. The shortage of bread in Russia caused Khrushchev to sell gold bullion for wheat purchases in the U. S. and Canada. Cuba shared the shortage, since Soviet Russia is its principal food source. As Russian wheat was augmented by foreign purchases, shipments to Cuba also increased."

There are still other food shortages, but the dramatic increase in starchy foods has served to take, at least for the time being, the heat off Castro, the Committee says.

A few weeks ago, the captain of a freight ship which had delivered wheat to Russia, said he saw U. S. wheat being transhipped for Cuba, which would be a violation of the trade agreement under which U. S. wheat was bought. The State Department said at the time that it had no such evidence.

The Committee's report indicates at least that the sales to Russia by Canada and the U. S. made it possible for Russia to divert grain — sources not specified — to Cuba.